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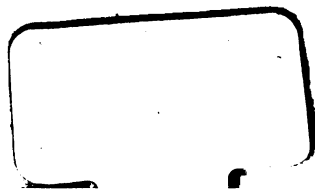
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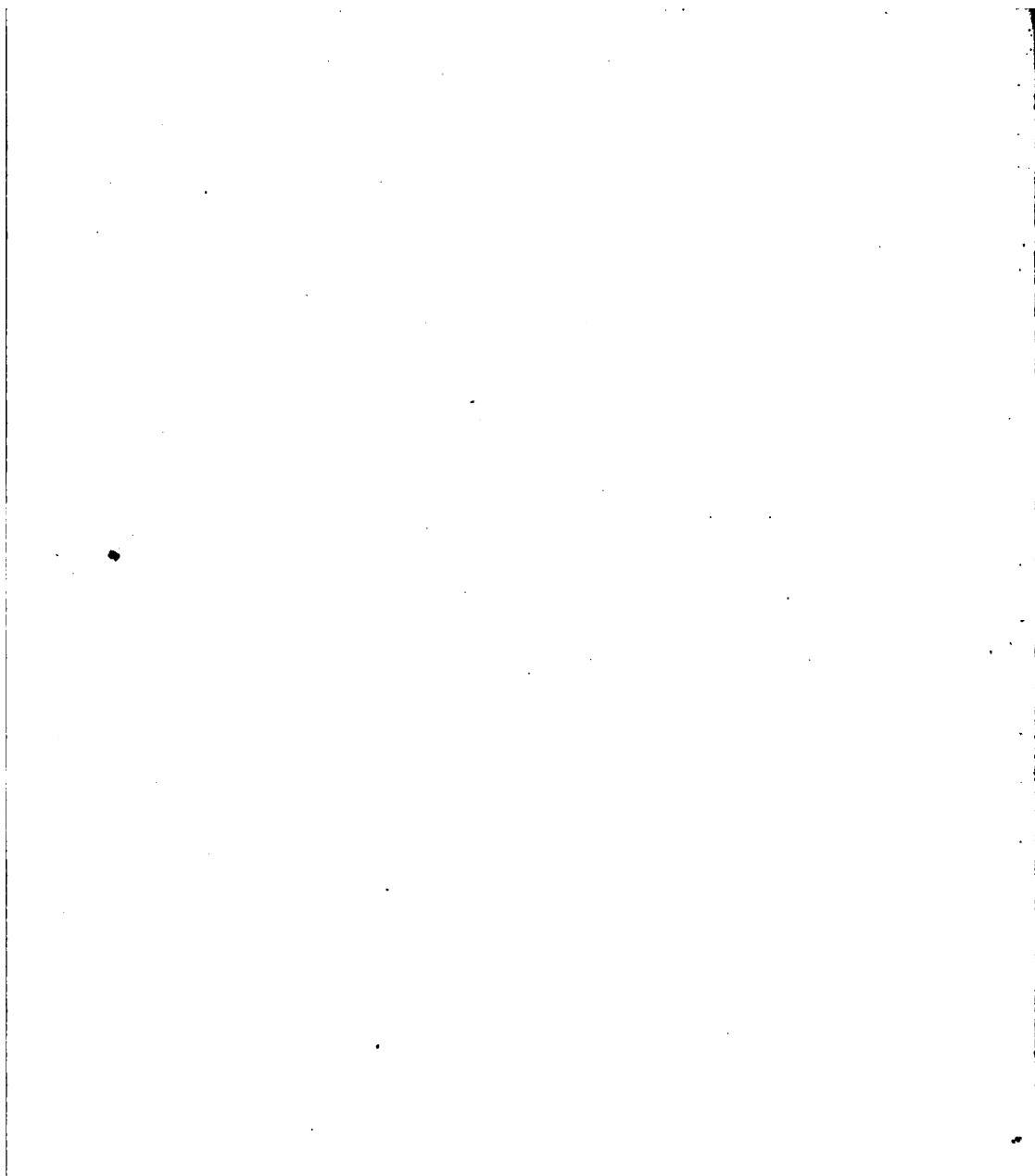
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(Original photograph of little Elsie Leslie.)

EDITHA.

EDITHA'S BURGLAR

A STORY FOR CHILDREN

BY

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

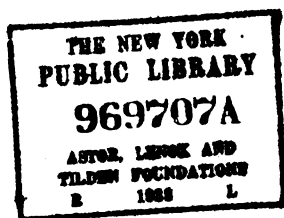
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HENRY SANDHAM.

BOSTON

JORDAN, MARSH & COMPANY

1888



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March 25 1888

Dear Mr Jordan Marsh & Co
Mamma has left it for me
to decide if I will let you
have my picture for your
book I think it wold be very
nice. wont it seem funny to
see my very own picture in
Editha like the little girl
that used. to be in it
Nicholas I think Mrs Burnet
write lovely storys I wrote
her a letter and sent it away
to paris and told her so and
asked her if she wold hurry
up and write another story just
as quick as she could I am
looking for an anser everyday.
I like to write letters but I

like to get ^{the} answers still better
I am going to play Editha in
Boston for two weeks and I will
ask my mamma to let me
come to your store and see all
of the beautiful things I used to
come every day when I was in
Boston last winter

your little friend

Elsie Leslie

72 West 92 Street
New York
City

(Written by Elsie Leslie Lyde, the original Editha,
eight years old.)



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her things to her, buttoning her little shoes and gloves, putting the perfume on her handkerchiefs, and holding her wraps until she wanted them.

This morning, when she went into the dressing room, she found the chamber-maid there before her, and her dear little mamma looking very pale.

"Ah mem! if you please mem!" the chamber-maid was saying, "what a blessing it was they did n't come here!"

"Who, Janet?" Editha asked.

"The burglars, Miss, that broke into Number Eighteen last night, and carried off all the silver, and the missus's jewelry."

"If burglars ever do break in here," said mamma, "I hope none of us will hear them, though it would almost break my heart to have my things taken. If I should waken in the night, and find a burglar in my room, I think it would kill me, and I know I should scream, and then there is no knowing what they might do. If ever you think there is a burglar in the house, Nixie, whatever you do, don't scream or make any noise. It would be better to have one's things stolen, than to be killed by burglars for screaming."



"NEVER MIND ABOUT THE BURGLARS, NIXEY."

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K. L. B.

She was not a very wise little mamma, and often said rather thoughtless things; but she was very gentle and loving, and Editha was so fond of her that she put her arms round her waist and said to her:

“Mamma, dearest, I will never let any burglars hurt you or frighten you if I can help it. I do believe I could persuade them not to. I should think even a burglar would listen to reason.”

That made her mamma laugh, so that she forgot all about the burglars and began to get her color again, and it was not long before she was quite gay, and was singing a song she had heard at the opera, while Editha was helping her to dress.

But that very night Editha met a burglar.

Just before dinner, her papa came up from the city in a great hurry. He dashed up to the front door in a cab, and, jumping out, ran upstairs to mamma, who was sitting in the drawing room, while Editha read aloud to her.

“Kitty, my dear,” he said, “I am obliged to go to Glasgow by the ‘five’ train. I must throw a few things into a portmanteau and go at once.”

“Oh, Francis!” said mamma. “And just after

that burglary at the Norris's! I don't like to be left alone."

"The servants are here," said papa, "and Nixie will take care of you; wont you, Nixie? Nixie is interested in burglars."

"I am sure Nixie could do more than the servants," said mamma. "All three of them sleep in one room at the top of the house when you are away, and even if they awakened they would only scream."

"Nixie would n't scream," said papa, laughing; "Nixie would do something heroic. I will leave you in her hands."

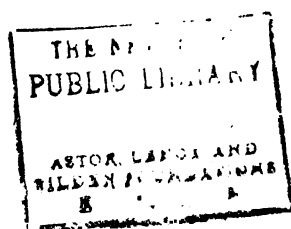
He was only joking, but Editha did not think of what he said as a joke; she felt that her mamma was really left in her care, and that it was a very serious matter.

She thought about it so seriously that she hardly talked at all at dinner, and was so quiet afterward that her mamma said, "Dear me, Nixie, what *are* you thinking of? You look as solemn as a little owl."

"I am thinking of you, mamma," the child answered.



"THE BURGLARS, MISS, THAT BROKE INTO NUMBER EIGHTEEN LAST NIGHT."



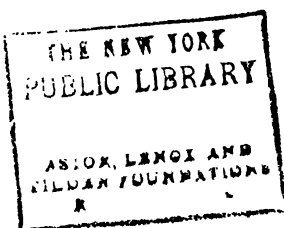
And then her mamma laughed and kissed her, and said: "Well, I must say I don't see why you should look so grave about me. I did n't think I was such a solemn subject."

At last bed-time came, and the little girl went to her mother's room, because she was to sleep there.

"I am glad I have you with me, Nixie," said mamma, with a rather nervous little laugh. "I am sure I should n't like to sleep in this big room alone."

But, after she was in bed, she soon fell asleep, and lay looking so happy and sweet and comfortable that Editha thought it was lovely to see her.

Editha did not go to sleep for a long time. She thought of her papa trying to sleep on the train, rushing through the dark night on its way to Scotland; she thought of a new book she had just begun to read; she thought of a child she had once heard singing in the street; and when her eyes closed at length, her mind had just gone back to the burglars at Number Eighteen. She slept until midnight, and then something wakened her. At first she did not know what it was, but in a few minutes she found that it was a queer little sound coming from down-stairs, — a sound like a stealthy filing of iron.



"I am sure papa would not like to be a burglar," said Editha, thoughtfully; "but perhaps he might speak to his friends about you, if you would give me your name and address, and if I were to tell him how obliging you were, and if I told him you really did n't like being a burglar."

The burglar put his hand to his pocket and gave a start of great surprise.

"To think o' me a forgettin' my card-case," he said, "an' a leavin' it on the pianner when I come hout. I'm sich a bloomin' forgetful cove. I might hev knowed I'd hev wanted it."

"It is a pity," said Editha; "but if you told me your name and your number, I think I could remember it."

"I'm afeared yer could n't," said the burglar, regretfully, "but I'll try yer. Lord Halgernon Hedward Halbert de Pentonwille, YdePark. Can you think o' that?"

"Are you a lord?" exclaimed Editha. "Dear me, how strange!"

"It is sing'lar," said the burglar, shaking his head. "I've hoften thought so myself. But not wishin' to detain a lady no longer than can be 'elped, s'pose

we take a turn in the lib'ery among yer respected par's things."

"Don't make a noise," said Editha, as she led the way.

But when they reached the library her loving little heart failed her. All the things her father valued most were there, and he would be sure to be so sorry if one thing was missing when he returned. She stood on the threshold a moment and looked about her.

"Oh," she whispered, "please do me another favor, wont you? Please let me slip quietly upstairs and bring down my own things instead. They will be so easy to carry away, and they are very valuable. and — and I will make you a present of them if you will not touch anything that belongs to papa. He is so fond of his things and, besides that, he is so good."

The burglar gave a rather strange and disturbed look at her.

"Go an' get yer gimcracks," he said in a somewhat grumbling voice.

Her treasures were in her own room, and her bare feet made no sound as she crept slowly up the



EDITHA CAME SLOWLY DOWN THE STAIRCASE WITH HER TREASURES.

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TILDEN FOUNDATION**

A

staircase and then down again. But when she handed the little box to the burglar her eyes were wet.

"Papa gave me the watch, and mamma gave me the locket," she whispered, tremulously; "and the pearls were grandmamma's, and grandmamma is in heaven."

It would not be easy to know what the burglar thought; he looked queerer than ever. Perhaps he was not quite so bad as some burglars, and felt rather ashamed of taking her treasures from a little girl who loved other people so much better than she loved herself. But he did not touch any of papa's belongings, and, indeed, did not remain much longer. He grumbled a little when he looked into the drawing-room, saying something to himself about "folks never 'avin' no consideration for a cove, an' leavin' nothin' portable 'andy, a expectin' of him to carry off seventy-five pound bronze clocks an' marble stattoos; but though Editha was sorry to see that he appeared annoyed, she did not understand him.

After that, he returned to the pantry and helped himself to some cold game pie, and seemed to enjoy it, and then poured out a tumbler of wine, which

Editha thought a great deal to drink at once.

"Yer 'e'lth, my dear," he said, "an' 'appy returns, an' many on 'em. May yer grow up a hornymment to yer sect, an' a comfort to yer respected mar an' par."

And he threw his head very far back, and drank the very last drop in the glass, which was vulgar, to say the least of it.

Then he took up his bundles of silver and the other articles he had appropriated, and seeing that he was going away, Editha rose from the pantry step.

"Are you going out through the window?" she asked.

"Yes, my dear," he answered with a chuckle, "it's a little 'abit I've got into. I prefers 'em to doors."

"Well, good-by," she said, holding out her hand politely. "And thank you, my lord."

She felt it only respectable to say that, even if he had fallen into bad habits and become a burglar.

He shook hands with her in quite a friendly manner, and even made a bow.

"Yer welcome, my dear," he said. "An' I must hadd that if I ever see a queerer or better behaved little kid, may I be blowed—or, as yer told me it



HE THREW HIS HEAD VERY FAR BACK, WHICH WAS VULGAR.

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would be more correcter to say, I'll be blown."

Editha did not know he was joking ; she thought he was improving, and that if he had had advantages he might have been a very nice man.

It was astonishing how neatly he slipped through the window ; he was gone in a second, and Editha found herself standing alone in the dark, as he had taken his lantern with him.

She groped her way out and up the stairs, and then, for the first time, she began to feel cold and rather weak and strange ; it was more like being frightened than any feeling she had had while the burglar was in the house.

" Perhaps, if he had been a very bad burglar, he might have killed me," she said to herself, trembling a little. " I am very glad he did not kill me, for— for it would have hurt mamma so, and papa too, when he came back, and they told him."

Her mamma wakened in the morning with a bright smile.

" Nobody hurt us, Nixie " she said. " We are all right, ar n't we ? "

" Yes, mamma dear," said Editha.

She did not want to startle her just then, so she

said nothing more, and she even said nothing all through the excitement that followed the discovery of the robbery, and indeed, said nothing until her papa came home, and then he wondered so at her pale face, and petted her so tenderly, and thought it so strange that nothing but her treasures had been taken from upstairs, that she could keep her secret no longer.

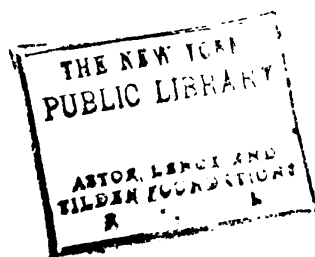
“Papa,” she cried out all at once in a trembling voice, “I gave them to him myself.”

“You, Nixie! You!” exclaimed her papa, looking alarmed. “Kitty, the fright has made the poor little thing ill.”

“No, papa,” said Editha, her hands shaking, and the tears rushing into her eyes, she did not know why. “I heard him, and—I knew mamma would be so frightened,—and it came into my mind to ask him—not to waken her,—and I crept down stairs—and asked him;—and he was not at all unkind though he laughed. And I stayed with him, and—and told him I would give him all my things if he would not touch yours nor mamma’s. He—he was n’t such a bad burglar, papa,—and he told me he would rather be something more respectable.”



"TO THINK OF HER RISKING HER DEAR LITTLE LIFE TO SAVE ME!"



And she hid her face on her papa's shoulder.

"Kitty!" papa cried out. "Oh, Kitty!"

Then her mamma flew to her and knelt down by her, kissing her, and crying aloud:

"Oh, Nixie! if he had hurt you, — if he had hurt you."

"He knew I was not going to scream, mamma," said Editha. "And he knew I was too little to hurt him. I told him so."

She scarcely understood why mamma cried so much more at this, and why even papa's eyes were wet as he held her close up to his breast.

"It is my fault, Francis," wept the poor little mamma. "I have left her too much to herself, and I have not been a wise mother. Oh, to think of her risking her dear little life just to save me from being frightened, and to think of her giving up the things she loves for our sakes. I will be a better mother to her, after this, and take care of her more."

But I am happy to say that the watch and locket and pearls were not altogether lost, and came back to their gentle little owner in time. About six months after, the burglar was caught, as burglars are apt to be, and, after being tried and sentenced to transpor-

tation to the penal settlements (which means that he was to be sent away to be a prisoner in a far country), a police officer came one day to see Editha's papa, and he actually came from that burglar, who was in jail and wanted to see Editha for a special reason. Editha's papa took her to see him, and the moment she entered his cell she knew him.

"How do you do, my lord?" she said, in a gentle tone.

"Not as lively as common, miss," he answered, "in consequence o' the confinement not bein' good fer my 'e'lth."

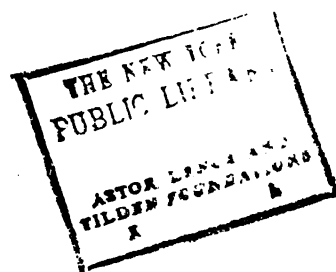
"None of your chaff," said the police officer. "Say what you have to say."

And then, strange to say, the burglar brought forth from under his mattress a box, which he handed to the little girl.

"One o' my visitors brought 'em in to me this mornin'," he said. "I thought yer might as well hev 'em. I kep' 'em partly 'cos it was more convenient, an' partly 'cos I took a fancy to yer. I've seed a many curi's things, sir," he said to Editha's papa, "but never nothin' as bloomin' queer as that little kid a-comin' in an' tellin' me she wont 'urt me,



THE BURGLAR BROUGHT FROM UNDER HIS MATTRESS A BOX, WHICH HE
HANDED TO THE LITTLE GIRL.



nor yet wont scream, and please wont I burgle quietly so as to not disturb her mar. It brought my 'art in my mouth when first I see her, an' then, lor', how I larft. I almost made up my mind to give her things back to her afore I left, but I did n't quite do that — it was agin human natur'."

But they were in the box now, and Editha was so glad to see them that she could scarcely speak for a few seconds. Then she thanked the burglar politely.

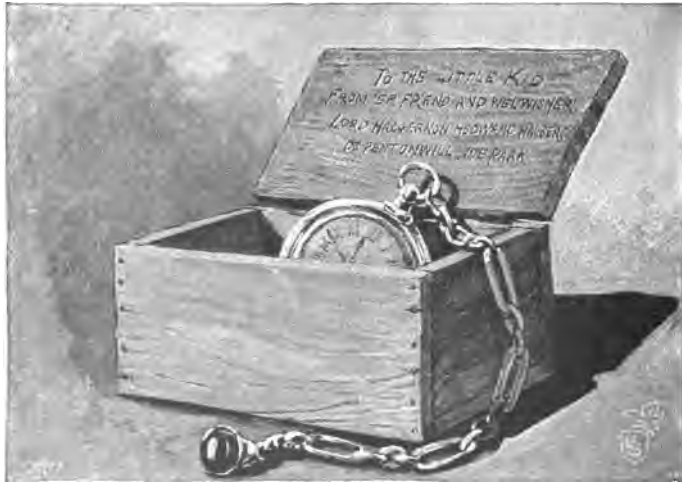
"I am much obliged to you," she said, "and I'm really very sorry you are to be sent so far away. I am sure papa would have tried to help you if he could, though he says he is afraid you would not do for an editor."

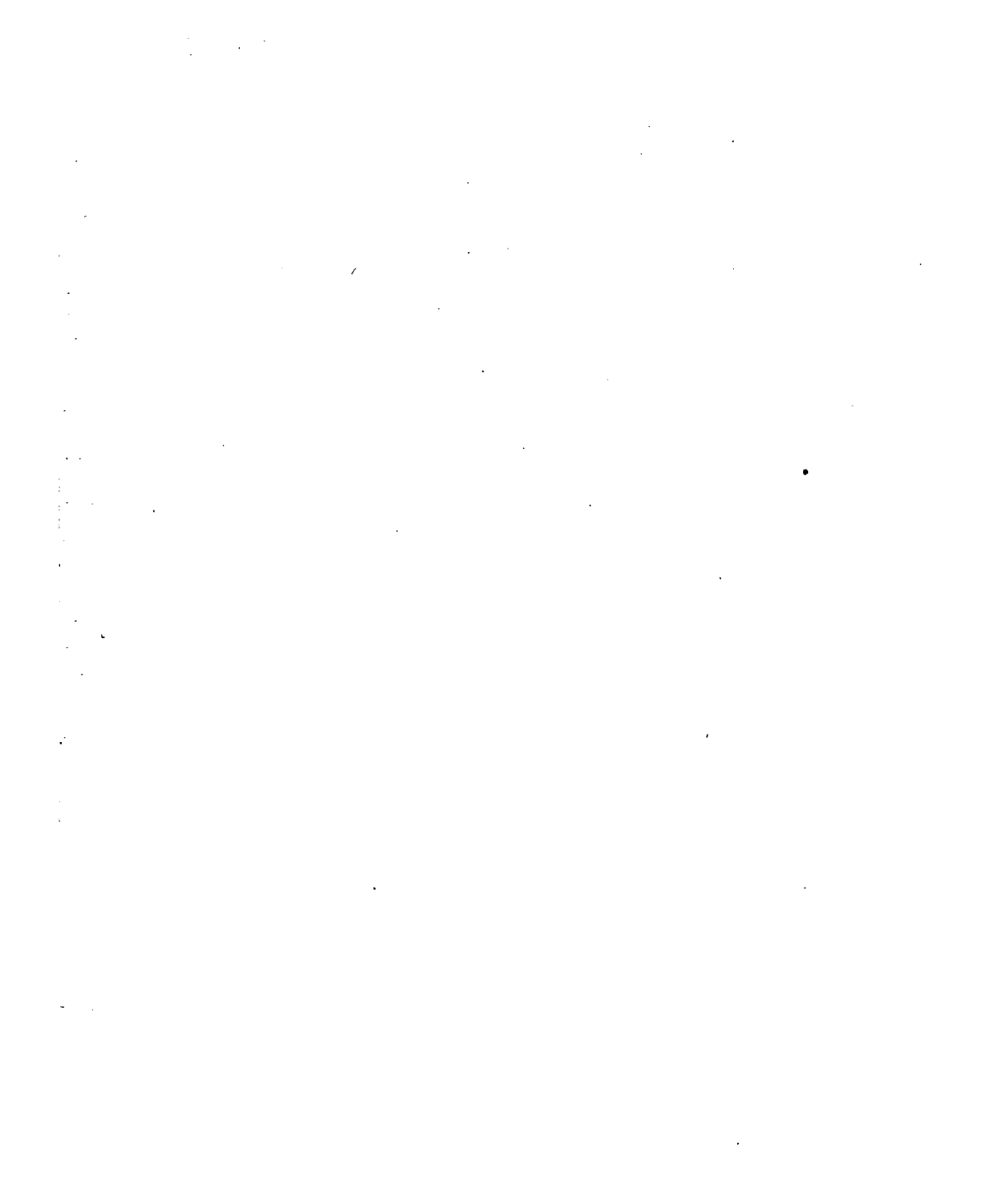
The burglar closed one eye and made a very singular grimace at the police officer, who turned away suddenly and did not look round until Editha had bidden her acquaintance good-bye.

And even this was not quite all. A few weeks later, a box was left for Editha by a very shabby, queer-looking man, who quickly disappeared as soon as he had given it to the servant at the door; and in this box was a very large, old-fashioned silver

watch, almost as big as a turnip, and inside the lid were scratched these words :

To the little Kid,
From 'er fr'end and wel wisher,
Lord halgerñon hedward halbert
de pentonwill, ide park.





JACK HALL;

OR,

THE SCHOOLDAYS OF AN
AMERICAN BOY.

By ROBERT GRANT. Illustrated by W. F. Attwood.

JACK IN THE BUSH;

OR,

A SUMMER ON A
SALMON RIVER. (JUST OUT.)

By ROBERT GRANT. Illustrated by Frank T. Merrill.

HOUSEKEEPERS AND HOMEMAKERS.

By SALLIE JOY WHITE.

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